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Friedrich Gulda
"Long Hair"—"Short Hair"

RECORD REVIEWERS: James Lyons
C. J. Luten • Philip L. Miller • James
Norwood • Anson W. Peckham
Peter Hugh Read • Robert Reid • Max
de Schanensee • Harold C. Schonberg

OPERA SPOTLIGHT

BERGSMA: *The Wife of Martin Guerre* (abridged); Mary Judd (Bertrande), Stephen Harbachick (Martin), Lynn Sarfaty (Catherine), others, and a chamber orchestra conducted by Frederic Waldman. Composers Recordings CRI-105X, \$4.98.

▲THE premiere of William Bergsma's first opera was given only last February. This recording collates the highlights of the three-act whole. The participants are alumni or students of Juilliard, the Opera Theater of which offered the initial production. They did a fine job in actual performance, and they do here. One suspects, in fact, that the recording derives from a tape made on that occasion. The sonic quality is not outstanding. It is sufficient, however. And these excerpts are enough to persuade the listener that Bergsma has fashioned a work of extraordinary merit by comparison with the bulk of modern lyric theater. Granted that the compliment is not effusive as stated. But the music is honest music, singable music, and of how many contemporary operas could you say as much? The libretto, by Janet Lewis Winters, deals handily with the story of a French peasant who, in 1548, was accused by his wife of being an imposter. She was right, but her discovery was a bit belated because by then she had fallen in love with him more she ever had been with her husband. The tragic consequences make for a powerful drama, and Bergsma does not (thanks be) try to impose his own musical personality on its unfolding. There will be plenty of time for him to do that when he has a less viable libretto to work with—which will be soon enough, since another as good as this one will be hard to come by. Again we are indebted to CRI for a notable contribution to recorded Americana.

—J.L.

CIMAROSA: *Il matrimonio segreto* (complete); Carlo Badiola (Geronimo), Eugenia Ratti (Elisetta), Graziella Sciutti (Carolina), Ebe Stignani (Fidama), Luigi Alva (Paolino), Franco Calabrese (The Count), Orchestra of La Piccola Scala conducted by Nino Samzogno. Angel set 3549, 3 discs, \$15.94.

▲ITALY'S famous La Scala now has an offspring known as the Little Scala Theatre, where intimate operatic performances can be ideally presented. It seats 600. For its opening performance last December, La Piccola Scala presented Cimarosa's comic opera *The Secret Marriage*, which Verdi endorsed as "the model of what an opera buffa should be." Since shortly after its premiere in Vienna, *The Secret Marriage* has been consistently

popular entertainment in the opera houses of Italy. Its libretto, written by the Austrian Court poet Giovanni Bertati, is as skillfully devised in its way as Cimarosa's delightful music. This performance has the same cast that appeared in the opening of La Piccola Scala last December 26th. The English critic, Francis Toye, in a report to the *New York Times*, endorsed the performance as "in every respect admirable", which these records confirm. If this recording was made in the Little Scala, it is a place that can be advantageously employed in recording future operas, for in balance and quality of reproductive sound it seems to have a definite edge on La Scala proper where a mellowness of tonal effects does not result in quite the same sonic liveness. Everybody engaged in this performance has an agreeable voice but in keeping with their positions as the leading characters, whose secret marriage results in so much trouble. Sciutti and Alva are especially praiseworthy. Luigi Alva, a young Peruvian tenor, is an exceptionally gifted lyric tenor who knows how to act with his voice as well as maintain an ingratiating tonal quality. Sanzogno's orchestral direction is skillfully contrived to keep the operatic champagne bubbles always alive. A previous performance of this opera (Cetra) was less inspired and poorly recorded.

—P.H.R.

DONIZETTI: *Don Pasquale* (complete); Renato Capecchi (Don Pasquale); Giuseppe Valdengo (Dr. Malatesta); Petre Munteanu (Ernesto); Bruna Rizzoli (Norina), Claudio Adorni (Notary), Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro di San Carlo di Napoli conducted by Francesco Molinari-Prandelli. Epic set SC-61016, 2 discs, \$9.96.

▲THE Dutch record reviewer Leo Riemens, familiar to readers of this magazine,

provides an interesting historical note on Naples' San Carlo Opera House with this set. "Naples can look back on an old and glorious operatic history," says Mr. Riemens. "It was in Naples that comic opera was born and it has always thrived there." As one reads about the famous artists of the past who sang at the San Carlo and then turns to this recorded performance of *Don Pasquale*, one comes to the conclusion that comic opera at the San Carlo is no longer in the front rank. Opera enthusiasts are familiar with the fine set deriving from La Scala that was issued by RCA Victor in 1933, featuring Schipa, Badini, Poli and Saraceni. No modern set has quite equalled this in overall excellence. For those who are interested, La Voce del Padrone in Italy has reissued that performance on three LPs (QALP 1021/22/23). Victor should arrange to reissue it here on Camden LPs.

While one must admit that the edge reproductively goes to this new set, it cannot be said that the balance of voices and orchestra is ideal here. Capecchi, remembered in the past as a fine baritone, turns to a buffa bass role with resultant loss of vocal quality. He does act with his voice, which would prove a more valuable asset in the theater than on records. Valdengo makes very little of his characterization of Dr. Malatesta, either vocally or histrionically. Munteanu, the Rumanian-born tenor, is colorless as Ernesto and vocally incompetent. Bruna Rizzoli, as Norina, should be a winning soubrette in the theater, judging from her photographs. She is commendable for her work in this recording. However, if one returns to the 1953 set of *Don Pasquale* issued by Cetra, one finds Alda Noni evidencing a charm that no other Norina in the complete performances to date has manifested. After Schipa, Valletti gives us the only performance of Ernesto worth living with, and the youthful Bruscatini gives us a convincing and vocally agreeable account of that old codger, Don Pasquale. And, by the way, the recording is eminently satisfactory.

—P.H.R.

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MILLAN, LOPEZ MONIS: *La Dogaresa* (Zarzuela in 2 Acts); Pilar Lorengar (Marietta), Manuel Auseni (Miccone), Carlos Munguia (Paolo), Teresa Berganza (Rosina), Antonio Campo (Zabulon), Julio Uribe (Marco), with Chorus and Grand Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ataúlfo Argentina. London XLL-1462, \$4.98.

▲THIS zarzuela, first produced in Barcelona in 1920, is said to be one of the favorites of the contemporary Spanish theatre. As a show, it is undoubtedly colorful, but as a plot it is somewhat preposterous. Imagine *Gioconda* and *Rigoletto* combined

(Continued on page 37)

The Madman's Mardigras

or

The New York Audio Show---1956

By Norman Long

▲THE SAME hubbub and the same mass of humanity surrounded this year's New York Audio Show, but some of the mystery and excitement once felt by old timers was gone. (An old timer is one who has attended more than two audio shows.) This does not sound like an old timer speaking, but audio is still a new operation and a new kind of business. Many of us who appreciate quality equipment started in this business as audiophiles whose primary interest in sound lay in quality reproduction of good music. Now we find that "quality" is no longer the byword. Good features originally were found in some equipment, but manufacturers are replacing these with gimmicks and gadgets just to sell the gear. This is a fault suffered by the industry as a whole. Soon, you'll have *nothing* but gimmicks—gimmicks all the way through any tuner, amplifier or what-have-you. This was the impression that the writer got as he walked through the 1956 show.

Some manufacturers are coming out with packaged goods to hit the mass market. This is a good sign, since many music listeners are neither technically minded nor do they have the time to assemble their own hi-fi set. Other manufacturers are bringing out their electrostatic speakers. This unit seems to be in approximately the same stage it was ten years ago, except that it has been exploited and advertised more. Electrostatics are extremely good if you play them at a low volume, but as soon as there are any transients, crescendi or even a good symphony playing at a fair volume, there is a certain amount of breakup and distortion. The audiophile has been attracted to this type of speaker lately because it is a new gimmick to him. It is doubtful that many audiophiles have known about electrostatic speakers for more than two years. The writer remembers hearing about them in 1945—eleven years ago, a long time for a unit like this to be in the experimental stage and still to be no better than it is. The one and only advantage of the electrostatic speaker

is much greater angle of dispersion. The disadvantages are many.

Fairchild Pickup

At the Fair, one steps from one exhibit to another. After listening to the electrostatic speaker, the writer moved onward to the Fairchild room. The new Fairchild micrajust cartridge is one of the best in the field at the present time. Of course, most of us know that Fairchild is the pioneer in this country of the moving coil principle. There is something else new about Fairchild products—the XP (short for experimental). This is one of the greatest ideas that has come around in hi-fi to date. Here is a manufacturer who has spent a lot of money experimenting on new products, as most of them do. Now Fairchild is planning to recover some of that money, and at the same time give the hi-fi bugs a chance to get in on the experiments. Here is how it works. A new product is designed. Since there always is the chance that it may not have the desired acceptance even though the manufacturer knows it works well and even thinks it will sell, he makes several hundred pieces and markets them to find out what the acceptance will be before he goes into full production. Out of the several hundred units sold, some of the money spent for experimenting is recovered. Sounds like a good idea for a good product.

There were several speakers which impressed the writer at this year's Fair. One of them was the Weathers SE 500—a big job that sells for about \$400. This is one of the best units that the writer has ever encountered in the speaker industry for so little money. It is an extremely efficient unit featuring 12 speakers—three 12" whoofers and nine 4" tweeters. If you stack it along side of a \$700 or \$800 system you will find that it will outperform the more expensive unit. There is actually no coloration or resonance added by the enclosure or the speaker. The sound is clean and clear from 20 cycles to above the audible range.

The new additions to the Goodmans Speaker line was displayed at the Fair by the Rockbar Corporation of Mamaroneck, N. Y.—the mid-range horn (known as the Mid Ax) and the tweeter (known as the Tre Bax). These are two fine units. They can be added to or used in conjunction with any full range speaker or the Goodmans woofer. You will immediately discover the cleanest and most natural upper range possible. Previous to hearing these new Goodmans speaker additions, the writer was of the opinion that high frequencies could not be reproduced well with anything except a cone tweeter, that all the rest of this piston driver and electrostatic business was passé. Now, however, with the addition of these two units to the Goodmans line, the three-way speaker system, as a successful reality, has finally come into its own. There is no dip or loss at the point of crossover nor any peaks in the high end of the Goodmans units. This, of course, is due to the extremely well balanced design of the Goodmans' crossover. Most piston drivers tend to rattle the inner ear, or mine anyway. Maybe I'm a little too sensitive.

New Enclosure

The Rockbar Corporation also has, for the Goodmans speakers, a new line of enclosures and enclosure kits designed to fit into the home. However, when an enclosure is made small enough to fit into the average room of today, there is always a certain amount of compromising done. Whenever the size of an enclosure is reduced, a certain amount of efficiency in the low frequencies is lost. From a merchant's point of view, the enclosure must be small enough to be a salable item from the buyer's point of view. It is like committing a sin to reduce efficiency in any part of the audible range. The writer feels that any enclosure must be properly sized to reproduce music well. A corner enclosure large enough to house the three-way Goodmans system should be at least 50" tall and 40" across. Actually, in most homes this would take

up a major portion of the living room, but it is nevertheless the best size to do justice to efficient reproduction of music.

While on the subject of cabinets, let me say this—any salesman in the industry finds it is not difficult to sell a record changer, a cartridge, an amplifier or a tuner to a hi-fi interested customer. However, when it comes to the cabinet that's another story. As yet, we find very few cabinets on the market suitable as furniture for the living room. Either they look like respectable furniture but will not house the equipment, or they will house the equipment but do not look like any respectable furniture. Several cabinets were displayed at the Fair. One was an exceptionally fine looking unit and not too expensive, but upon closer inspection the reason for the low price was readily apparent. Undoubtedly, it will fall apart in two or three years. The best cabinet that the writer has ever seen at any audio show was one displayed by a speaker manufacturer. It was a speaker system which looked like a handsome piece of furniture. If more companies would aim at cabinets to sell their products, I think that sales would boom in the future. The Stephens concern had Charles Eames design some enclosures for them which are trimmed with aluminum and look quite good in the proper setting. This line of cabinets is still backed up by the standard Stephens line.

Stereophonic Sound

Another feature at the Fair was stereophonic sound. To achieve stereophonic sound, two pieces of each equipment is required. This of course doubles the price of the entire system. The layout is steep when you take into consideration a fine hi-fi system that sells at \$1200. When any company makes a stereophonic system they have to cut corners to bring the price down for the average income level groups. Unfortunately, when this is done some component must suffer. One company displayed a stereophonic model, complete with cabinets, for \$2000. The tape deck housed in this expensive unit is available on the open market for \$50. Considering that the deck is the source or starting point of the sound in this unit it is rather an inexpensive component to be the center of a \$2000 outlay. Most audiophiles, including yours truly, are "Point Source men", which means that they like all the sound emanating from one place.

These were just some of the points as well as the failings highlighted by the 1956 Audio Show in New York. This writer came away feeling that somewhere along the line the real search for high fidelity had been sidetracked. However, like everyone else, the writer looks forward to next year. Perhaps it will be a golden year in which we will find that long sought chimera—the key to golden sound.

In the Lighter Mood



▲THERE are numerous intermediary states of expression, admittedly, between the polarities known as heavy and light music, classical and popular music, or what you will. Where, for example, to consider the *Grand Canyon Suite* and the *Mississippi Suite* of Ferde Grofé? Capitol has just issued a handsome coupling of these works in performances by the Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra under Felix Slatkin (P-8347). Quite aside from its formerly ubiquitous presence as a theme for you-know-which cigarettes, the atmospheric "On the Trail" from the more familiar work is only one felicity of a withal rather impressive piece of Americana. Grofé deals with the river as colorfully as he does with the desert. Kaleidoscopic sound to match.

Campoli

The violinist Alfredo Campoli, these days known only by his surname à la Mantovani, has done a fine recital of encores for London (LL-1461). Accompanied by Eric Gritton, he offers *The Bee* of Schubert, a *Tango* of Albéniz, Elgar's *La Capricieuse*, Achron's arrangement of the Mendelssohn *On Wings of Song*, the once ubiquitous *Valse bluette* of Drigo, and several other favorites by Drdla, Fibich, Ponce, Fiocco, Debussy, and even Stephen Foster. Lovely violinism.

Morton Gould

Morton Gould is a far better composer than he is generally given credit for being. He is also an arranger of extraordinary talent. On RCA Victor LM-1994 he has compiled a fascinating program entitled *Jungle Drums*. It includes his own *Tropical* and fourteen other pieces of variously appropriate tropicality. Among these are at least two that have needed phonographic revival for a long time—*The Little Train of the Caipira* by Villa-Lobos and the *Batuque* of Fernandez. Both of these used to be available on 78s and their absence from the catalogues has been a disgrace. Also assembled here: Ellington's *Caravan*, Mooney's *Swamp Fire*, and fully eight numbers by Lecuona, including the title tune. Gould uses a virtuosic pickup orchestra. The recorded sound is sensational.

Stanley Black

Speaking of Lecuona, London's Stanley Black has given us an entire disc of the Cuban composer's insinuating, infectious music. Only *La Comparsa*, *Canto Karabali* (i.e., *Jungle Drums*) and *Malaguena* are duplications of the Gould program. The latter emphasizes their more or less indigenous aspects. Black makes them—and all the others—into salon music par excellence. The contents (LL-1348) are otherwise *Siboney*, *Danza Lucumi*, *Gita-*

narias, *Maria My Own*, *You Are Always in My Heart*, and *High in Sierra*. The *ffrr* sound is of course de luxe, but shimmering and lush rather than brilliant in the RCA Victor manner.

Bruno Walter Sampler

In connection with Bruno Walter's 80th birthday, Columbia has issued a bargain-priced sampler (WZ-1, \$1.98) that is certainly worth every nickel of that figure. Try it on those friends who pretend to a disdain for long-haired music. It assembles the *Blue Danube Waltz*, the outer movements of Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, an *Entr'acte* from Schubert's *Rosamunde*, the Brahms *Hungarian Dances No. 1 and No. 3*, Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*, and the second movement of Mahler's *First Symphony*. No seasoned collector will want to trifle with this item, needless to say. But I cannot imagine a more effective lure with which to indoctrinate non-sophisticates. As indicated, all of the performances are previous issues—and all are beyond criticism. —J.N.

The Philadelphians

Virtuosi di Philadelphia: PAGANINI:

Moto Perpetuo; GABRIELI: *Sonata Pian e Forte (Symphoniae Sacrae)*; MILHAUD: *Concerto for Percussion and Small Orchestra*; RICHARD STRAUSS: *Serenade for Wind Instruments in E-flat, Op. 7*; BRAHMS: *Serenade No. 2* (two movements only); ELGAR: *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1*; the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5129, \$3.98.

▲TRULY, the Philadelphia Orchestra is the world's finest. If there be any doubt, one need only listen to the recording at hand. What other orchestra of today or yesterday could equal the combinations of Kincaid, Tabuteau, McLean and Schoenbach in the woodwinds; of Caston, Anton Horner, Charles Gusikoff and Donatelli in the first chairs of the brass; of Oscar Schwar, Podemski, and Valerio in the percussion; or of Hilsberg, Lifschey, Kindler, Mayes (currently heading the Boston cello), or Benar Heifetz to mention but a few who have held first desks in the strings? Stokowski built a fabulous instrument, but the sound produced by the Philadelphians today is quite different. It is truly Ormandy's orchestra and every bit as good. However, what makes a truly great ensemble is not individual artistry, but a precision of harmony among the various sections. The works played here cannot be called the most evocative of each composer's output. Perhaps the Milhaud Concerto is the most inventive of all. But the purpose of the disc is to display the brilliance and precision of the Virtuosi di Philadelphia. This it more than achieves. The engineering is Columbia's best. —A.K.

OPERA SPOTLIGHT

(Continued from page 34)

and altered—with a court jester in love with a Venetian lady who in turn loves a gondolier. Much familiar intrigue—the doge is murdered, presumably by the gondolier; the lady promises the jester that she will be his mistress if he gets her lover free, whereupon the jester, bursting the seams of his costume with his sudden transition from villain to benefactor calls to the crowd to free the gondolier and to arrest him—the real murderer. A 19th-century Italian composer would have made a real grand opera out of this hodge-podge, but the music here is merely light and tuneful in the Spanish manner with no great significance dramatically. If you are an opera enthusiast and have heard a dozen or more *zarzuelas*, you have heard this score, for it is decidedly eclectic. All of the principals are supplied with long arias, undoubtedly gratifying to them and to Spanish audiences. Miss Lorengar comes off best with her artistic verve. Baritone Ausensi (the jester) and tenor Manguia (the gondolier) are not quite up to their best form, but they enter into the spirit of the performance as do the others in smaller roles, and Ataulfo Argenta directs the orchestra with his usual assurance and authority. Excellent recording. —J.N.

MOZART: *Così fan tutte*; Lisa Della Casa (Fiodiligi); Christa Ludwig (Dorabella); Emmy Loose (Despina); Anton Dermota (Ferrando); Erich Kunz (Guglielmo); Paul Schoeffler (Don Alfonso); Vienna State Opera Chorus and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Karl Boehm. London XLLA 32, 3 discs, \$14.94.

▲WHAT this performance lacks is evident in the first few measures of the overture—there just isn't much sparkle. This may be due to the incorrigible Germanness of the conductor (though other Germans have developed the Italian touch in Mozart) and certainly matters are not helped by the Germanic cast. There is, to be sure, some lovely singing throughout the set, but the important recitatives are rather heavy-handed. The best of the singers is the Swiss Miss Della Casa, who maintains a neat musical line and a characteristically lovely tone. Miss Ludwig does not quite match her in tidiness, though her Dorabella is acceptable enough. Emmy Loose is a satisfactory Despina. Dermota has a tendency to blat in the upper register, which may be another effect of the Italian language, and Kunz seems at times to have about all he can do to keep up with Mozart's notes. Schoeffler's voice is naturally no longer the fine instrument it once was, but he husbands

it with the finest art and manages to sound surprisingly well. Occasionally Boehm sets the singers a tempo they can scarcely keep up with, but on the whole the performance seems to me well paced. There are a number of what I suppose we should call "judicious cuts." My choice for a recording of the opera remains with Angel. The set reviewed had two mechanical defects, a blast at the line "Mi faccia vivendo penar" in the first act duet *Ah guarda, sorella*, and a curious momentary tonal stoppage on the words "Il tragico spettacolo" in the first act finale, near the end of side 3. —P.L.M.



Lisa Della Casa

MUSSORGSKY: *Boris Godunov*; Miro Chagalovich (Boris), Stepan Andrashevich (Prince Shuisky), Branko Pivnichki (Pimen), Melanie Bugarinovitch (Marina), Zharko Tzveych (Varlaam) and other soloists, chorus and Orchestra of the National Opera, Belgrade, conducted by Kreshimir Baranovich. London set XLLA-31, 3 discs, \$14.94.

▲IN its Belgrade operatic sojourns, London was more successful in acquiring desirable performances of Borodin's *Prince Igor* and Mussorgsky's *Khovantchina* than of *Boris*. If the RCA Victor set featuring Boris Christoff, who unmistakably wears the mantle of Chaliapin, were non-existent, one might be more receptive to this new set which, as a performance, is definitely second-rate by comparison. The balance in reproduction here is not good—the orchestra is drab in sound and not on equal terms with the singers. Moreover, it is poorly conducted. The singers are more than capable artists, but none of them seems really inspired. Chagalovich does not make as much of his big scenes as does Christoff or Pirogov (Period set), and the other basses (as Pimen and Varlaam) seem to have had their off-days. Nor is Melanie Bugarinovitch's lovely contralto used to best advantage in Marina's role.

The fact that this set takes three discs to Victor's four is owing to the omission of scene one of Act III (usually cut in the opera house) and other small excisions. It is possible that these cuts were made in the original Belgrade performance and not by London engineers. The familiar Rimsky-Korsakov version of *Boris* is used here. One decided asset of this set is its libretto, with its free translation of the Russian language. Actually, the text is printed three ways—(1) phonetic translation of the Russian for the comprehension of the English reader, (2) English translation, and (3) original Russian printing of text. —J.N.

Music for Louis XIV

SYMPHONIES ET FANFARES POUR LES SOUPERS DU ROY: *Fanfares* (Mouret); *La Steinkerque* (Couperin); *Marche des Mousquetaires du Roy*; *Marche des Mousquetaires gris*; *Fanfares pour le Carrousel de Monseigneur de 1686* (Lully); *Symphonies pour les soupers du Roy* (La Lande); *Marche a quatre timbales* (Philidor); *Marche du Regiment de Turenne* (Lully); Collegium Musicum de Paris direction of Roland Douatte. London International TWV-91092, \$4.98.

▲SOME readers will remember the 78-rpm records, issued by Oiseau-Lyre, of La Lande's (or Lalande's; see article in our June 1955 issue) *Symphonies pour les soupers du Roy* performed so handsomely by Roger Désormière. On this disc, we have eight more of those functional pieces equally as delightful as the group chosen by Désormière. The *Roy* for whom Lalande and the other composers represented on this disc wrote all this music was King Louis XIV. He seems to have been a glutton for background music; he "had an orchestra playing to him music suitable to every occasion throughout the day from the time he arose until he retired for the night." This is a most entertaining program, exceptionally well arranged as such programs go. Even the tournament march by Philidor for kettle drums with its off-pitch reproductive effects is entertaining. But the things that listeners will return to, again and again, are the domestic music rather than the military—the Couperin trio-sonata, *La Steinkerque*, the *Fanfares* of Mouret which probably served a double purpose within as well as without the palace, and the *Symphonies for the King's Suppers* by Lalande. The direction of the various ensembles used is quite competent. M. Douatte is quite aware that all this music, which "should not be listened to with any excess of mental effort," should not be performed in a pedantic manner. First-rate reproduction. —P.H.R.

Notes and Reviews

THERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Couper

RECITAL OF ARIE ANTICHE: *Il Pompeo*—Toglietemi la vita ancor (Scarlati); *Vezzosity e care pupilletti* (Falconieri); *La Donna ancora e Fedele*—*Se Florindo e fedele* (Scarlati); *La Serva Padrona*—*Stizzoso, mio stizzoso*; *Se tu m'ami* (Pergolesi); *Alcina*—*Ah, mio cor* (Handel); *I zingari in Fiera*—*Chi vuol la Zingarella* (Paisiello); *Amarilli, mia bella* (Caccini); **RAVEL:** *Cinq Mélodies populaires grecques*; *Chansons madecasses*; Irma Kolassi (mezzo-soprano) and Jacqueline Bonneau (piano). London LL 1425, \$3.98.

▲MISS KOLASSI'S admirers must ever be nonplussed by the way she repeats herself in her various recorded programs. This, her second recital of *Arie antiche*, contains no less than five repeats from her first, while on the reverse of the disc we have the Greek songs for the second time along with the *Chansons madecasses* which are new. Though I am willing to grant some improvement in her singing of the Italian songs, this repertoire is really not her field; her singing is at best tasteful, tonally pleasant and mild. With Ravel she is in her element, especially the Greek songs, which she sings in her native tongue. She misses some of the elemental quality of the amazing Madagascar songs, but is quite convincing in the parts that call for tender expression. Her style is not too far removed from that of Jennie Tourel; I would say the two singers' performances of these songs are satisfactory in much the same way.

—P.L.M.

BACH: *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue; Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E flat; Italian Concerto; Prelude and Fugue in A minor*; Agi Jambor (piano). Capitol P8348, \$3.98.

▲FROM this disc, rather than from her recent recording of the six *Partitas*, it is easier to hear why Miss Jambor has been "hailed as one of the world's greatest interpreters of Johann Sebastian Bach". The playing is clear, crisp, clean and accurate; and not a note is out of place or obscured by pedal. But much of it lacks variety of tone and dynamics, and the great *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* hasn't the drive it acquires in performances that

are more grandly conceived, if perhaps less accurately executed. The well-recorded works are elucidated (like the *Partitas*) in the notes by Karl Geiringer. —E.Z.

BACH: *Concertos No. 1 in D minor, and No. 3 in D* for Organ and Orchestra; Richard Ellsasser (organ) with the Philharmonia Orchestra of Hamburg, conducted by Hans-Jürgen Walthers. M-G-M E-3365, \$3.98.

▲A CHECK with the LP catalogue will reveal that this is the first LP recording of any Bach Organ Concertos. However, the music may sound vaguely familiar to you. Indeed, these are none other than the Harpsichord Concertos played on an organ! Alas, Bach left us no instructions, and his term, "Klavier", could have meant any keyboard instrument of the day. We must, therefore, be guided by taste and discretion in deciding for ourselves what medium seems to be implied from the nature of the music itself. I, for one, cast all my votes for the harpsichord—or even for the piano—rather than the organ, which seems to me too huge a monster for proper balance between soloist and orchestra in music of this contrapuntal nature. What could be excellent performances are seriously marred by a recording which is extremely thin, harsh, and strident, especially in the strings. You will not be able to listen with anything approximating normal volume level unless you own a superb hi-fi set, with limitless compensation. —D.H.M.

BARTOK: *For Children, Vol. 2; Allegro barbaro; Six Roumanian Folk Dances; Two Roumanian Dances; Suite, Op. 14; Three Burlesques, Op. 8c; Nine Little Piano Pieces; Geza Anda* (piano). Angel 35246, \$3.48 & \$4.98.

▲HERE are two of the many new discs of Bartok piano music that have recently been issued; it is indicative of this composer's popularity that all of these pieces have been recorded before, some as often as half a dozen times! Little of this is "difficult" Bartok, and much of it, like the *Roumanian Folk Dances*, has a tunefulness that is, of course, immediately appealing and unashamedly popular.

Volume 2 of *For Children* consists of 39 pieces, the longest of which lasts 2' 5", and the shortest only 20". Mr. Anda and Miss Farnadi, both born in Budapest and once students at the Academy there, play the music with finesse, rhythmic accuracy, and a minimum of percussive tone. The sound is fine on both discs, and the Angel cover offers a good reproduction of a painting by Chagall. —E.Z.

BARTOK: *Selections from Mikrokosmos, Vols. 4, 5, 6; Selections from For Children, Vol. 1; Sonata. (Decca DL-9801) Selections from For Children, Vol. 2; Two Elegies, Op. 8B; Six Rumanian Folk Dances; Fantasy II; Seven Sketches, Op. 9; Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs, Op. 20. (Decca DL-9802) 15 Hungarian Peasant Songs; Sonata for Piano (1926); Rumanian Christmas Carols; Suite, Op. 14. (Decca DL-9803) Out of Doors (1926); 10 Easy Pieces for Piano; Allegro Barbaro; Nine Little Piano Pieces (1926); Three Burlesques, Op. 8C; Andor Foldes (piano). Decca DL-9804, \$3.98 each disc.*

▲THIS is the most important release of Bartok's piano music to date and, from a standpoint of performance, probably the most desirable. For Foldes is a more vital performer than the several who have recently recorded Bartok's piano music. The touch of a lady, Edith Farnadi, with her sensitivity and delicacy, cannot be dismissed and, one is reminded, Sandor has his attributes as a pupil of the composer. It is curious that neither Foldes nor Sandor, both pupils of Bartok, is a true disciple of the master. In matters of tempi, they are neither in agreement with each other or with Bartok. There are two LP discs made by Bartok that confirm this—the first "Bartok plays Bartok" (Remington 199-94) and the second 35 pieces from the last three books of *Mikrokosmos* (Columbia ML-4419). The latter has the best sound but neither, being dubbings from 78 rpm, are sonically satisfactory. Foldes seems to have dedicated his time of late to disseminating far and wide the music of his late friend and teacher by giving all-Bartok concerts in Europe and this country. He exploits an impelling quality and a virility in his interpretations, which doesn't make for easy listening to the uninitiated in works both dissonant and percussive—especially the *Sonata for Piano*. Bartok, for some, is not easy to take, but many of his folk-song and dance selections have a certain charm of their own. —J.N.

THE ART OF HAROLD BAUER: *Sonatas in F minor, Op. 57 ("Appassionata"), and C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight") (Beethoven); Etude in D flat; Waldesrauschen (Liszt); Harold Bauer* (piano). Camden CAL 311, \$1.98.

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IF Harold Bauer's name is slightly less universally known, his playing is every bit as masterly, though not so individualistic, as Paderewski's. His technique is absolutely flawless, his tone rich and subtly colored, and his style characterized by perfect taste and great restraint. Thus, although the first movement of his "Appassionata" may seem a bit dispassionate, there is not a phrase that sounds forced or uncontrolled. The slow movement is especially beautiful, as is the Liszt *Walderauschen*. There are, of course, various degrees of record scratching to listen through on these discs, since these selections were dubbed from 78 rpm, but the playing takes one's mind away from it, and the Bauer—especially the "Appassionata"—sounds surprisingly up-to-date. —E.Z.

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BEETHOVEN: *Concerto in D, Op. 61;* Jascha Heifetz (violin) with the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. Victor LM-1992, \$3.98.

▲IN 1940, at 39, Heifetz recorded this work with Toscanini and the NBC Symphony in that acoustical chamber of horrors—Studio 8H. An exciting performance, sonically it did not do justice to the collaboration of two great musicians. There is plenty of excitement in the Heifetz-Munch collaboration with its sumptuous sound, but it is hardly of the same order as previously evidenced from the record. Technically, Heifetz at 55 is still astonishing—as fine a violinist and musician as is now before the public. Someone once said that Heifetz can claim our attention in any kind of music, which is true. Despite some passages marred by over-emphasis, which one suspects may be the result of Munch's sometimes rough and ready, but nevertheless incandescent orchestral treatment, Heifetz remains the dominant personality. Oistrakh (Angel) and Milstein (Capitol) offer the keenest competition, for both are equally gifted in their own ways, and are also represented by performances superbly reproduced. —P.H.R.

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BEETHOVEN: *Sonatas No. 30 in E, Op. 109; No. 31 in A flat, Op. 110; No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111;* Glenn Gould (piano). Columbia ML 5130, \$3.98.

▲COLUMBIA has crowded Glenn Gould's performances of the last three Beethoven sonatas onto a single disc (the turnover is during the slow movement of *Op. 110*, right before the first fugue), and covered it with an essay by the pianist. Mr. Gould's highly individualistic talent is evident in every groove, and there are moments when he sheds new light on passages that have darkened with familiarity. Thus it is all the more to be regretted that the individuality often becomes eccentricity, and that the novelty of a personal interpretation frequently seems wilfully at variance with any reasonable reading of what Beethoven

wrote. Mr. Gould has a great technique; we are already acquainted with the clarity of his playing of contrapuntal music, here evident in the *Op. 110* fugues. That he can also play flawlessly at maximum speed, he also demonstrates in the first movement of *Op. 111*, and some of the variations of *Op. 109*, which are faster here than in any other performance on record. In his essay, Mr. Gould objects to the popular view of Beethoven as a "mystic visionary" in his last works. I sympathize with this objection, but wish it had been expressed in less picturesque prose. Excellent sound. —E.Z.

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BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 4 in B-flat, Op. 60; Symphony No. 8 in F, Op. 93;* the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati. Mercury MG-50100, \$3.98.

▲THE late Serge Koussevitzky often used the word "élan" to describe a desired effect in a performance. Call it charm, nuance, polish, or style; they all mean the same. The revered maestro meant these and more—an indescribable quality, yet one immediately recognizable. It is the élan that both of these performances lack. The notes are all there, and for the most part they are well played. Beethoven's directions as to tempi and dynamics are closely followed except for an unmarked retard taken in the closing bars of the introduction of the *Fourth Symphony*. Yet there is a roughhewn and lackluster quality about both readings. The *Eighth* seldom glows with its inherent robustness; the jubilant and reflective *Fourth* seems fatigued. My own sentiments still lie with the Walter performances of both works. Granted that Northrop Auditorium is acoustically far from ideal, but surely the Mercury engineers can elicit more than the dry, tubby, lifeless sound produced here. —A.K.

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BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 6 in F, Op. 68 ("Pastoral");* Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. RCA Victor LM-1997, \$3.98.

▲MUNCH can go hog-wild with the standard symphonies, and this *Pastoral* is probably the most free-wheeling in the catalogues. Still, it has an irrepressible

vitality, and the BSO is, after all, entitled to romp around the fields like the perfectly trained athletes they are. I am not suggesting that this is a muscular performance, in the usual sense. Far from it. It is rather as if so many Olympic track champions were to be turned loose on the countryside. They don't lose their breath at any point, but the audience does, if our metaphor may be stretched a bit. Actually, the score is resilient enough to take this kind of treatment in stride, and I rather enjoyed it the first time around. Then, however, I began to miss the familiar delights of this travelogue; to want, once again, a more leisurely look at certain of the rustic beauties Beethoven depicted with such astonishing verisimilitude. But there is no gainsaying Munch's way with the music *per se*; it is just that he doesn't see it as a landscape. The sound is electric, befitting so extraordinary a show of kinetic energy. —J.L.

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BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 ("Choral");* Bayreuth Festival Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Wilhelm Furtwaengler (Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Elisabeth Hoengen, Hans Hopf and Otto Edelmann). RCA Victor set LM-6043, 2 discs, \$7.96.

▲AS a musical experience, this recording is out of the ordinary. The strength and sensitivity of Furtwaengler's direction, the power and beauty that he evokes, remain impressive and strongly satisfying even though one may find cause to disagree with some of his subjectively dictated interpretative liberties. What places this set apart from all others is the wonderfully unifying direction of the forces that make up the final movement and the excellence of the solo quartet. Decidedly, this is the best solo quartet that has sung on records to date; definitely they are four equally inspired artists. The choral singing is highly competent but tonally diffused on occasion. The reverberant characteristics of the reproduction in the final movement are somewhat obtrusive at times. This may be due to the fact that the recording was made during a live performance on the reinauguration of the Bayreuth Festival in August 1951. One suspects that the engineering department did not make tests for sound balance of this finale in relation to the other three movements. However, the reproduction is amazingly realistic and, if one did not know the date of the performance, one would think it was made last year. And, despite the reference to reverberation in the finale, the recording is less afflicted that way than the Karajan set recently issued by Angel.

Furtwaengler combines beauty and strength in his handling of the opening movement, which may well result in most listeners deriving the greatest satisfaction from his interpretation of what some describe as a musical depiction of the

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Creation. His playing of the Scherzo, on the other hand is less inspired than Toscanini's. It is not surprising to discover that Furtwaengler can move as deeply in the slow movement, even to the extent of reminding us of the poet's line "when beauty grows too great to bear". Of course, Toscanini is equally as compelling in this movement with his particular sublimity of expression. Which man is closest to the heart and soul of Beethoven may well remain a highly debatable matter. —P.H.R.

■
BEREZOWSKY: *Brass Suite*; **DAHL:** *Music for Brass Instruments*; **HINDEMITH:** *Morgenmusik*; **SANDERS:** *Quintet in B Flat*; Roger Voisin (trumpet) and his brass ensemble (Armando Ghitalla, trumpet; Paul Keaney and Osbourne McConathy, horns; Kauko Kahila and Joseph Orosz, trombones; Kilton Vinal Smith, tuba). Unicorn UNLP-1031, \$3.98.

▲THIS disc bears the title, "The Modern Age of Brass". It is one of the current "Music at M. I. T." series, which is to say that it was recorded at the Kresge Auditorium of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It is also to say that the sound is superb. The instrumentalists are virtuosi all. The works themselves are of variable quality. Easiest to take, and to my tastes the least edifying also, is the Sanders piece. Hindemith writes skillfully for brass but I find his *Morgenmusik* rather surprisingly dull. The other two couplings are a delight. Berezowsky never did get his just desserts, either on records or in the concert hall. This *Suite* is not the most important of his generally unknown scores, but it is an ingeniously wrought essay in the Poulenc manner. Who knows? Someone may get around to his bigger things yet, now that he has fulfilled the first requirement of immortality by dying. Dahl writes in the Stravinskian style but his ideas are his own and he handles them with originality notwithstanding the hero worship (what better hero for a contemporary composer?). One looks forward to return engagements by these marvelous Boston Symphony boys. May they have the good sense to employ the same engineer (Peter Bartók) and to use the same premises when next they foregather for recording. —J.L.

■
BRITTEN: *The Little Sweep*; The English Opera Group Orchestra, Choir of Alleyn's School, and soloists, under the direction of Benjamin Britten. London XLL-1439, \$4.98.

▲IN ALL respects, this is a charming production. Its musical success lies in the fact, I think, that Britten did not have to change his style to write a children's opera. His melodic invention has always been basically a simple modality; and this, with his characteristically colorful harmonies and brilliant orchestration, suited Eric Crozier's amusing and clever

little libretto to perfection. The result is a most entertaining and musically well worth-while little opera, which will stand many repeated hearings. Britten also has proved that he is a conductor of considerable worth, for his performance leaves very little to wish for. The children's choir, as well as the soloists, sing and speak their parts with obvious relish. We must mention the dialogue, also, which is not only very cute of itself, but completely enchanting with the British accents. Couple all this with London's wonderfully clear sound, and you have a rare musical treat which should not be missed. —D.H.M.

■
BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 4 in E Flat* ("Romantic"); *Scherzo* from *Symphony No. "0"*; *Overture in G minor*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Lovro von Matacic. Angel set 3548-B or discs 35359/60, \$9.96 or \$6.96.

▲NOT counting the Supraphon issue, there are now seven available versions of this mighty work. None of the others is better than this latest on any count, and none offers so much bonus material of especial interest to the Brucknerite—unless, of course, he already owns the complete *Zero Symphony* on Concert Hall, and prefers to avoid the partial duplication. Myself, I am annoyed by it. But it is good to have this first acceptable performance of the wonderful little *Overture in G minor*. The conductor elects that edition of the *Symphony* to be found in the Eulenburg miniature score (as distinguished from the *Originalfassung* published by the Brucknerverlag of Wiesbaden), which adds up to six of one and a half-dozen of the other as regards this particular piece. The performance is in every way exemplary. Matacic is painstaking about detail but he does not fall into the usual error of slowing down the proceedings while he is at it. There is a grand sweep to his conception, and the Philharmonia is just the orchestra to deliver the goods. The sound is exceptionally brilliant throughout. —J.L.

■
CHAILLEY: *Missa Solemnis*; La Psallete Notre-Dame, conducted by Jacques Chailley; **FRANCK:** *Prelude, Chorale et Fugue (1885)*; Celiny Chille-Richez, piano. London International TW 91145, \$4.98.

▲THE only reason I can see for such a combination as this of Franck and Chailley is that the piano work is played by Mme. Chailley. Her playing is sound and straightforward, rather dryly recorded. With this as a prelude, we make the acquaintance of a composer new to American records. Born in 1910, Jacques Chailley studied with Nadia Boulanger, Henri Busser and Pierre Monteux, among others, and has divided his time between composing, writing extensively about music, and conducting. He founded the Psallete

that performs his work for us in 1933, and later took over the Chanterie de la Renaissance from Henri Expert. Not unnaturally his style has its roots in the older music, though this *Mass* (1954) suggests the choral music of Poulenc in the piquancy of its dissonances. The work will repay serious study, for it is full of subtleties. To mention one, the "motif" at the words "Jesu Christe" in the *Gloria* occurs again in the *Credo* and the *Agnus Dei*. One feels great sureness and authority in the performance. —P.L.M.

■
CORELLI: *Concerti Grossi, Op. 6, Nos. 4, 7, 9, 8, 10*; I Musici. Epic LC-3264, \$3.98.

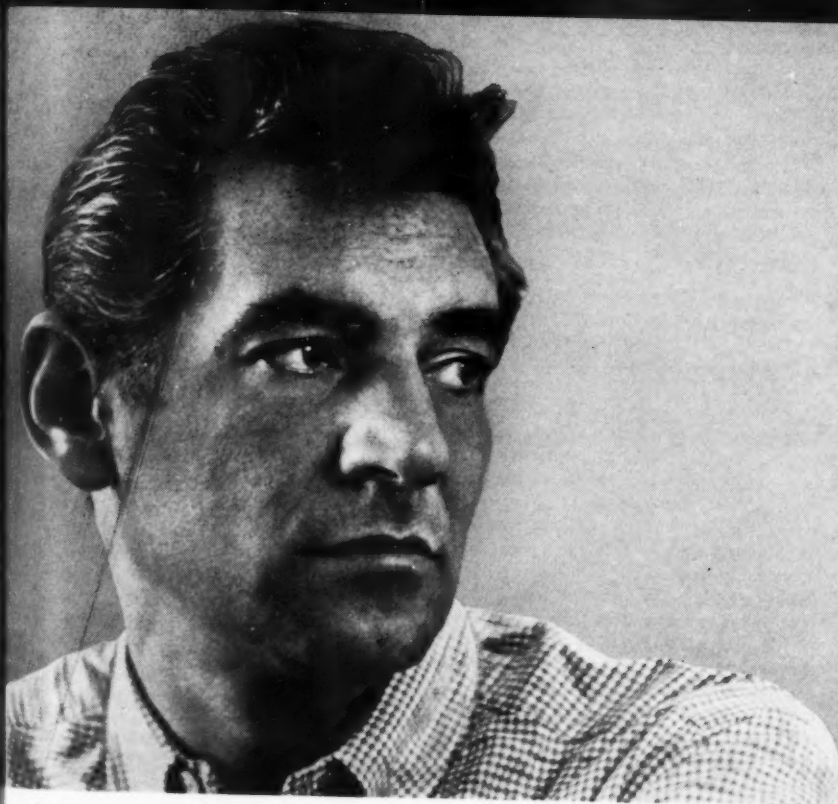
▲KNOWLEDGE and appreciation of the baroque concerto grosso literature has increased enormously in recent years, and rightly so. That Corelli's works in this field have been somewhat overshadowed by those of Bach, Handel, and Vivaldi is undoubtedly true. This is regrettable, and the music on this disc attests to the fact. Corelli was indeed a very original composer with a purity of style which is singular in the beauty of its sustained, relatively unembellished, line. I Musici are a skilled, sympathetic group of musicians, and they do justice to these fine baroque compositions. Westminster has released the only seriously competing complete version of the *Op. 6*. Quadri is well recorded, and his clarity of perception and well-molded phrases are admirable. One looks forward to a complete recording of these works by the incomparable Virtuosi di Roma, who stylistically are more adept than any other similar ensemble. Meanwhile, this recording, though not the complete *Concerti Grossi* (another disc may be on the way), is more than adequate in those it contains. The string tone is full and live, with the proper amount of brilliance in the recorded sound. —D.H.M.

■
COUPERIN: *Messe des Paroisses*; Stig Rasjo (organ). London-International TWV-91110, \$4.98.

▲THIS disc contains an entire organ mass, each section of which is a very short but dramatically a complete contrapuntal composition. A veritable collection of gems, this, by a composer whose genius for the organ has been sadly neglected due to a contemporary who dominated the era—J. S. Bach. Short as these pieces are, they seem to me fully as powerful as many of Bach's immortal works in this medium, and they cry for further investigation into Couperin's organ output. Nor is a fine performance lacking. Stig Rasjo is an artist with excellent technique and feeling for style. The organ itself (in the Varfrukyrka, or Notre-Dame, in Skaenninge, Sweden) is a magnificent instrument, patterned after those of the baroque era. It is rich in color, varied in

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work is performed by Bruno Walter and the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York. ("Omnibus" series) CL 918 \$3.98

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texture, and speaks with utmost clarity in every register—ideal for polyphonic music. The recording is excellent, but if you wish *really* to hear this very same instrument, try the Westminster Lab records, with Carl Weinrich in performances of Back organ works. Westminster has captured a certain full-bodied richness that the London engineers seem to have missed. —D.H.M.

DEBUSSY: *Iberia; La Mer; Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun*; the Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paul Paray. Mercury MG-50101, \$3.98.

▲THERE are some who would have us believe that in order for Debussy's or Ravel's music to be played with the most insight, it must be played by a Frenchman. Similarly, Wagner must be sung or conducted by Germans and Rossini by Italians. Nonsense! It is quite true that Monteux has a special way with the Impressionists; Furtwaengler excelled in Wagner (for certain tastes), and Toscanini in the Italian repertory. But Koussevitzky was not a Frenchman; nor is Toscanini a German, or Beecham an Italian. In short, artistic endowment is more a personal thing than one of nationality. Although Paray's orchestra plays with a luscious tone, due chiefly to his work with it, Debussy's wind and waves have a great deal more to say to each other than the noted conductor has discovered. And surely a fair thrown by the hot-blooded Spaniards is a much more exciting thing than it is as expounded here. *The Afternoon of a Faun* is another matter, however. The soft, limpid pastels of Debussy's beautiful orchestra are thoroughly realized. Excellent, live reproduction throughout. —A.K.

DEBUSSY: *Le Martyre de Saint-Sebastien*; Phyllis Curtin (soprano), Florence Kopleff and Catherine Akos (contraltos), New England Conservatory Chorus and Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. Victor LM 2030, \$3.98.

▲LIKE two of the three earlier recordings of this "modern mystery" which D'Annunzio and Debussy created for the dancer Ida Rubinstein, this version omits enough of the spoken text to reduce its bulk from two discs to one. Aside from completeness, however, the Inghelbrecht set (Ducretet-Thomson 93040-41) rejoices in the solo singing of Claudine Collart, who has yet to be matched in the music. A point of special interest in the present performance is that the spoken lines are delivered with quiet dignity by Mr. Munch himself. Clearly he is the hero of the occasion, for he understands and loves such music as this. And the sheer sound of the Boston Orchestra, beautifully reproduced, is hardly rivaled by any of the earlier recordings. On the other hand, his singers leave something to be

desired. Miss Curtin's tone is appealing and her style, as always, musicianly, yet she misses the glow, the essential Frenchness, of Collart's singing. The tone of the chorus is a little rough, and these young singers, too, seem not quite at home in the language. Lastly, the two contraltos who introduce the work, are a bit too vibrant for perfect teamwork. My choice of a recording of *Saint Sebastian*, then, remains with Inghelbrecht. —P.L.M.

DEBUSSY: *Suite Bergamesque; Estampes; Children's Corner*; Rudolf Firkusny (piano). Capitol P 8350, \$3.98.

▲ONLY the absence of the most delicate coloring prevents this from being first-rate Debussy playing. Somehow the piano tone seems too bright—especially for pieces like the "Jardins sous la pluie"—and occasionally too sharp. But the collection of pieces is delightful, and well worth having. The *Suite Bergamesque* includes, of course, "Clair de lune", and Capitol should be congratulated for not advertising the fact on the record cover. —E.Z.

DVORAK: *Slavonic Dances, Op. 46 & Op. 72* (complete); **SMETANA** (trans. Szell): *From my Life (Quartet in E minor)*; Cleveland Orchestra conducted by George Szell. Epic set SC-6015, two discs, \$7.96.

▲ONE familiar with the music-making of Szell through the years might suspect that his disciplinary tendencies would rob these spirited dances of much of their tangy characteristics. To the contrary, this Hungarian-born conductor with his Czech background has long displayed a flair for the music of Dvorak and Smetana. Who else has queried the instrumental limitation of the Smetana *E minor Quartet* and dared to give us a new slant on this music? Having migrated from Columbia to Epic, a matter of altering an association on books only, Szell's performance of the Smetana is transferred from the Columbia to the Epic catalogue as a somewhat weighty encore to the Dvorak dances. Only point in disfavor to this, however, is the quality of recording in the Smetana is not equivalent to that in the Dvorak. The effect of hearing the *Slavonic Dances*, performed by a full concert orchestra, as it apparently is here and in the London-Kubelik set, tends to give this essentially out-of-doors music a ponderousness that obscures the vision of colorful dancers in appropriately pastoral surroundings. One's mental vision is less weighted when listening to the Talich performances, though less auspiciously recorded, on Urania discs. —J.N.

FALLA: *El Amor Brujo*; (Also, Debussy's *Clair de lune* and *Marche écossaise*, Falla's *Spanish Dance*, Chabrier's *Habanera*, and Mussorgsky's *Gopak*); L'Orchestre de la Suisse Ro-

mande, conducted by Ernest Ansermet with Marina de Gabarain (mezzo). London LL-1404, \$3.98.

▲ANSERMET is at his best in music of a colorful and exotic nature—music which displays iridescent orchestrations and infectious local color. He is not an extremist. His tempos are neither too fast nor too slow. His style is smooth and effortless, and the music, instead of being pushed, glides of its own momentum. However, this is not to say that he lacks imagination. He merely comes as close as anyone, in my opinion, to letting the music speak for itself. True, there might be a slight lack of sufficient emotional intensity in the *El Amor Brujo*, but the dark hues of color and mood are painted with wonderful consistency throughout. The orchestra needs little mention; it is justly famous for its flawless technique and shimmering tone quality. Credit must also be extended to Mlle. de Gabarain, the mezzo soloist. Hers is not a great voice, but its colorful gypsy qualities blend perfectly with Ansermet's interpretation to make this, in my opinion, the most desirable *Amor* in the current catalogue. Nor should we neglect the London engineers, who have given us clear and well-balanced sound. —D.H.M.

FAURE: *Complete Songs*; Renée Doria (soprano), Berthe Monmart (soprano), Paul Derenne (tenor), Jacques Dutey (baritone), Pierre Mollet (baritone), Simone Gouat, Tasso Janopoulos and Harry Cox (piano). Westminster WXX 5502, 5 discs, \$19.90.

▲THIS breathtakingly ambitious and highly laudable undertaking offers most of us our first opportunity to hear many of these songs in any sort of performance. The program is arranged more or less chronologically (the opus numbers out of order are so, I should suppose, in order to give contrast by spacing the singers) and we can follow the growth of one of the world's really great song writers. Not all his songs are masterpieces, of course—some of the earlier ones are not much more than salon trifles—but from the first quarter on there are amazingly few failures. The very first song—*Le Papillon et la Fleur*—amusingly, is almost pure Chopin. The second—*Mai*—has at least a haunting cadence, and the third—*Dans les ruines d'une abbaye*—is in its way a little *chef d'oeuvre*. Hugo's poem has a subtle rhythmic contrast in each line which Fauré has caught and preserved, so that the contrast is maintained throughout between the laughing young couple and the sombre abbey ruins they are exploring. Really, however, the important Fauré songs begin with *Lydia* (one of the loveliest puns in music, it is based on the Lydian mode) and from this point on they are increasingly fine. The Verlaine settings which come a bit later, the devastating Richepin song *Au Cim tière*,

are typical of the mature Fauré output. It is interesting that as we follow the course of his productive genius Fauré becomes more and more sparing of his notes, finally achieving an almost unparalleled economy of means.

It would be a fine thing to praise the singing here as one can not help praising the songs. But we must face the fact that these are acceptable rather than outstanding singers, and though they sometimes rise to an admirable standard, they also have their less successful moments. The one exception is Paul Derenne, who stands out almost uncomfortably from his colleagues with his secure and purposeful vocalism. But he is not blest with an impressive voice. Mollet occasionally turns in a better than average performance (though his tone has a hoarse quality) and Miss Monmart's singing is sometimes understanding as well as tonally attractive. The complete French texts with brief précis of their meaning are provided in a booklet. —P.L.M.

GOUNOD: *Little Symphony in B minor; SCHUBERT: Eine kleine Trauermusik; Minuet and Finale in F; L'Ensemble d'instruments à vent* Pierre Poulteau. London LL-1407, \$3.98.

▲THE Mercury recording of Gounod's adroit charmer has needed a replacement for some time. Indeed, I suspect that only the most adventuresome listeners have not passed it by on account of age. It is really a pity that one so rarely encounters, in recital, any woodwind ensemble larger than a quintet. I don't know that I have ever heard this delicious piece in a concert hall, nor was I acquainted with the Schubert miniatures from live performance. This is the kind of repertory for which we must turn gratefully to LP. Poulteau has assembled a first-class band of instrumentalists (two each of oboes, clarinets, horns, and bassoons, plus a single flute for the *Petite symphonie*), and the sound is sweet presence itself. Wind players doubtless will acquire the disc as a matter of course. I urge others to investigate it. There is a lot more than blurps and blip-blips in this music. —J.L.

HANDEL: *Organ Concerti, Op. 4, Nos. 2, 5, Op. 7, Nos. 1, 5;* Lawrence Moe (organ) and the Unicorn Concert Orchestra conducted by Klaus Liepmann. Unicorn UNLP-1032, \$3.98.

▲STUNNING sound. These performances were made in the windowless, cylindrical brick chapel at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge. Moe plays with fine Handelian spirit, but his orchestral support tends to heaviness. Next year being the bicentennial of this composer's death, presumably there will be no lack of duplicate versions in this repertory. Meantime the fine Vox performances will

do nicely, as they have for several years already. —J.L.

HAYDN: *Die Schöpfung;* Irmgard Seefried (soprano), Richard Holm (tenor), Kim Borg (basso), St. Hedwig's Cathedral Choir, and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Igor Markevitch. Decca DX 138, 2 discs, \$9.96.

▲ONE feels that in this *Creation* the soloists have been picked with especial care, that they as well as chorus and orchestra have been thoroughly rehearsed and given and opportunity to absorb the music. And there is no doubt that Markevitch himself feels and loves the work. After hearing this performance the best earlier recording (which sounded very well before)—that of Woelke—seems to lumber along through the music. The phrasing in the new set gives a lift to many pages, and the orchestral details that are brought out reveal Haydn's imagination in a marvelous way. The insinuating sound of the contrabassoon at the mention of the beasts in the bass aria, again the figure at the mention of leviathan are superbly realized. There is also some ravishingly beautiful soft orchestral playing. Miss Seefried stands out as the finest of an excellent trio; her arias are quiet and refreshing, and the warm quality of her voice goes to the heart. Holm does a creditable job with his light voice, especially in the recitatives. In the aria *Mit Wuerd und Hoheit* I felt his tone was definitely undersize, and here for once I took exception to the quick tempo adopted. Kim Borg makes up in musical feeling and dramatic intelligence what he lacks in sensuous vocal quality. Not the least of the set's virtues is the balance: the orchestral sound is clear and crisp, but it never dominates too much, and the choral work is exceptionally clean. All in all, this is the best *Creation* so far issued, and one that will be hard to surpass. —P.L.M.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 94 ("Surprise"); MOZART: Eine kleine Nachtmusik, K. 525;* The N.W.D.R. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt. Capitol P-18022, \$3.98.

▲BACK in the early days of LP, Capitol issued a performance of this Haydn symphony performed by Schmidt-Isserstedt which rated first in preferred lists for a long time. Since then the better reproduced versions of Beecham, Furtwaengler and Toscanini have taken precedence. Not to have Schmidt-Isserstedt permanently ruled out of court, Capitol, with the aid of its German affiliates, has acquired another fine performance by this German conductor, excellently recorded. Schmidt-Isserstedt does not over-exploit the "Surprise" element in the slow movement. Indeed, his consistently tidy music-making with its gentle subtleties does justice to Haydn's overall intentions in this and the

other three movements. Since the performance of the Mozart *Serenade* (over-side) is equally well played, one unhesitatingly recommends this disc to the attention of Haydn and Mozart partisans. Curiously, the Mozart work seems better reproduced on first acquaintance, but this is due to the fact that the level of sound is slightly higher than in the Haydn. Turning the volume control up for the latter is necessary to match the Mozart. —P.H.R.

HAYDN: *Sonatas in A flat, No. 8; in G, No. 10; in C minor, No. 25; and in E, No. 30;* Kathleen Long (piano). London LL 1380, \$3.98.

▲WHILE the Peters Edition numbering of the Haydn sonatas is used on the record sleeve, the more commonly accepted Breitkopf and Haertel numbering is used on the disc itself (Nos. 46, 40, 20 and 31). In spite of the efforts of the Haydn Society, only about a third of the more than fifty sonatas have been recorded, and two of them (the *G* and the *E*) appear here for the first time on LP. Pianists in search of repertory ought to look into them, for they are in many ways more original and interesting than the over-recorded sonatas of Mozart. Miss Long's accurate playing conveys much of the music's wit, but some *presto* movements sound rushed, and one would like to hear

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texture, and speaks with utmost clarity in every register—ideal for polyphonic music. The recording is excellent, but if you wish *really* to hear this very same instrument, try the Westminster Lab records, with Carl Weinrich in performances of Back organ works. Westminster has captured a certain full-bodied richness that the London engineers seem to have missed.

—D.H.M.

DEBUSSY: *Iberia; La Mer; Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun*; the Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paul Paray. Mercury MG-50101, \$3.98.

▲THERE are some who would have us believe that in order for Debussy's or Ravel's music to be played with the most insight, it must be played by a Frenchman. Similarly, Wagner must be sung or conducted by Germans and Rossini by Italians. Nonsense! It is quite true that Monteux has a special way with the Impressionists; Furtwaengler excelled in Wagner (for certain tastes), and Toscanini in the Italian repertory. But Koussevitzky was not a Frenchman; nor is Toscanini a German, or Beecham an Italian. In short, artistic endowment is more a personal thing than one of nationality. Although Paray's orchestra plays with a luscious tone, due chiefly to his work with it, Debussy's wind and waves have a great deal more to say to each other than the noted conductor has discovered. And surely a fair thrown by the hot-blooded Spaniards is a much more exciting thing than it is as expounded here. *The Afternoon of a Faun* is another matter, however. The soft, limpid pastels of Debussy's beautiful orchestra are thoroughly realized. Excellent, live reproduction throughout.

—A.K.

DEBUSSY: *Le Martyre de Saint-Sebastien*; Phyllis Curtin (soprano), Florence Kopleff and Catherine Akos (contraltos), New England Conservatory Chorus and Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. Victor LM 2030, \$3.98.

▲LIKE two of the three earlier recordings of this "modern mystery" which D'Annunzio and Debussy created for the dancer Ida Rubinstein, this version omits enough of the spoken text to reduce its bulk from two discs to one. Aside from completeness, however, the Inghelbrecht set (Ducretet-Thomson 93040-41) rejoices in the solo singing of Claudine Collart, who has yet to be matched in the music. A point of special interest in the present performance is that the spoken lines are delivered with quiet dignity by Mr. Munch himself. Clearly he is the hero of the occasion, for he understands and loves such music as this. And the sheer sound of the Boston Orchestra, beautifully reproduced, is hardly rivaled by any of the earlier recordings. On the other hand, his singers leave something to be

desired. Miss Curtin's tone is appealing and her style, as always, musicianly, yet she misses the glow, the essential Frenchness, of Collart's singing. The tone of the chorus is a little rough, and these young singers, too, seem not quite at home in the language. Lastly, the two contraltos who introduce the work, are a bit too vibrant for perfect teamwork. My choice of a recording of *Saint Sebastian*, then, remains with Inghelbrecht.

—P.L.M.

DEBUSSY: *Suite Bergamesque; Estampes; Children's Corner*; Rudolf Firkusny (piano). Capitol P 8350, \$3.98.

▲ONLY the absence of the most delicate coloring prevents this from being first-rate Debussy playing. Somehow the piano tone seems too bright—especially for pieces like the "Jardins sous la pluie"—and occasionally too sharp. But the collection of pieces is delightful, and well worth having. The *Suite Bergamesque* includes, of course, "Clair de lune", and Capitol should be congratulated for not advertising the fact on the record cover.

—E.Z.

DVORAK: *Slavonic Dances, Op. 46 & Op. 72* (complete); **SMETANA** (trans. Szell): *From my Life (Quartet in E minor)*; Cleveland Orchestra conducted by George Szell. Epic set SC-6015, two discs, \$7.96.

▲ONE familiar with the music-making of Szell through the years might suspect that his disciplinary tendencies would rob these spirited dances of much of their tangy characteristics. To the contrary, this Hungarian-born conductor with his Czech background has long displayed a flair for the music of Dvorak and Smetana. Who else has queried the instrumental limitation of the Smetana *E minor Quartet* and dared to give us a new slant on this music? Having migrated from Columbia to Epic, a matter of altering an association on books only, Szell's performance of the Smetana is transferred from the Columbia to the Epic catalogue as a somewhat weighty encore to the Dvorak dances. Only point in disfavor to this, however, is the quality of recording in the Smetana is not equivalent to that in the Dvorak. The effect of hearing the *Slavonic Dances*, performed by a full concert orchestra, as it apparently is here and in the London-Kubelik set, tends to give this essentially out-of-doors music a ponderousness that obscures the vision of colorful dancers in appropriately pastoral surroundings. One's mental vision is less weighted when listening to the Talich performances, though less auspiciously recorded, on Urania discs.

—J.N.

FALLA: *El Amor Brujo*; (Also, Debussy's *Clair de lune* and *Marche ecossaise*, Falla's *Spanish Dance*, Chabrier's *Habanera*, and Mussorgsky's *Gopak*); L'Orchestre de la Suisse Ro-

mande, conducted by Ernest Ansermet with Marina de Gabarain (mezzo). London LL-1404, \$3.98.

▲ANSERMET is at his best in music of a colorful and exotic nature—music which displays iridescent orchestrations and infectious local color. He is not an extremist. His tempos are neither too fast nor too slow. His style is smooth and effortless, and the music, instead of being pushed, glides of its own momentum. However, this is not to say that he lacks imagination. He merely comes as close as anyone, in my opinion, to letting the music speak for itself. True, there might be a slight lack of sufficient emotional intensity in the *El Amor Brujo*, but the dark hues of color and mood are painted with wonderful consistency throughout. The orchestra needs little mention; it is justly famous for its flawless technique and shimmering tone quality. Credit must also be extended to Mlle. de Gabarain, the mezzo soloist. Hers is not a great voice, but its colorful gypsy qualities blend perfectly with Ansermet's interpretation to make this, in my opinion, the most desirable *Amor* in the current catalogue. Nor should we neglect the London engineers, who have given us clear and well-balanced sound.

—D.H.M.

FAURE: *Complete Songs*; Renée Doria (soprano), Berthe Monmart (soprano), Paul Derenne (tenor), Jacques Dutey (baritone), Pierre Mollet (baritone), Simone Gouat, Tasso Janopoulo and Harry Cox (piano). Westminster WXN 5502, 5 discs, \$19.90.

▲THIS breathtakingly ambitious and highly laudable undertaking offers most of us our first opportunity to hear many of these songs in any sort of performance. The program is arranged more or less chronologically (the opus numbers out of order are so, I should suppose, in order to give contrast by spacing the singers) and we can follow the growth of one of the world's really great song writers. Not all his songs are masterpieces, of course—some of the earlier ones are not much more than salon trifles—but from the first quarter on there are amazingly few failures. The very first song—*Le Papillon et la Fleur*—amusingly, is almost pure Chopin. The second—*Mai*—has at least a haunting cadence, and the third—*Dans les ruines d'une abbaye*—is in its way a little *chef d'oeuvre*. Hugo's poem has a subtle rhythmic contrast in each line which Fauré has caught and preserved, so that the contrast is maintained throughout between the laughing young couple and the sombre abbey ruins they are exploring. Really, however, the important Fauré songs begin with *Lydia* (one of the loveliest puns in music, it is based on the Lydian mode) and from this point on they are increasingly fine. The Verlaine settings which come a bit later, the devastating Richepin song *Au Cim tière*,

are typical of the mature Fauré output. It is interesting that as we follow the course of his productive genius Fauré becomes more and more sparing of his notes, finally achieving an almost unparalleled economy of means.

It would be a fine thing to praise the singing here as one can not help praising the songs. But we must face the fact that these are acceptable rather than outstanding singers, and though they sometimes rise to an admirable standard, they also have their less successful moments. The one exception is Paul Derenne, who stands out almost uncomfortably from his colleagues with his secure and purposeful vocalism. But he is not blest with an impressive voice. Mollet occasionally turns in a better than average performance (though his tone has a hoarse quality) and Miss Monmart's singing is sometimes understanding as well as tonally attractive. The complete French texts with brief précis of their meaning are provided in a booklet. —P.L.M.

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▲THE Mercury recording of Gounod's adroit charmer has needed a replacement for some time. Indeed, I suspect that only the most adventuresome listeners have not passed it by on account of age. It is really a pity that one so rarely encounters, in recital, any woodwind ensemble larger than a quintet. I don't know that I have ever heard this delicious piece in a concert hall, nor was I acquainted with the Schubert miniatures from live performance. This is the kind of repertory for which we must turn gratefully to LP. Poulteau has assembled a first-class band of instrumentalists (two each of oboes, clarinets, horns, and bassoons, plus a single flute for the *Petite symphonie*), and the sound is sweet presence itself. Wind players doubtless will acquire the disc as a matter of course. I urge others to investigate it. There is a lot more than blurps and blip-blips in this music. —J.L.

HANDEL: *Organ Concerti, Op. 4, Nos. 2, 5, Op. 7, Nos. 1, 5; Lawrence Moe (organ) and the Unicorn Concert Orchestra* conducted by Klaus Liepmann. Unicorn UNLP-1032, \$3.98.

▲STUNNING sound. These performances were made in the windowless, cylindrical brick chapel at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge. Moe plays with fine Handelian spirit, but his orchestral support tends to heaviness. Next year being the bicentennial of this composer's death, presumably there will be no lack of duplicate versions in this repertory. Meantime the fine Vox performances will

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HAYDN: *Die Schoepfung; Irmgard Seefried (soprano), Richard Holm (tenor), Kim Borg (basso), St. Hedwig's Cathedral Choir, and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Igor Markevitch.* Decca DX 138, 2 discs, \$9.96.

▲ONE feels that in this *Creation* the soloists have been picked with especial care, that they as well as chorus and orchestra have been thoroughly rehearsed and given and opportunity to absorb the music. And there is no doubt that Markevitch himself feels and loves the work. After hearing this performance the best earlier recording (which sounded very well before)—that of Woeldike—seems to lumber along through the music. The phrasing in the new set gives a lift to many pages, and the orchestral details that are brought out reveal Haydn's imagination in a marvelous way. The insinuating sound of the contrabassoon at the mention of the beasts in the bass aria, again the figure at the mention of leviathan are superbly realized. There is also some ravishingly beautiful soft orchestral playing. Miss Seefried stands out as the finest of an excellent trio; her arias are quiet and refreshing, and the warm quality of her voice goes to the heart. Holm does a creditable job with his light voice, especially in the recitatives. In the aria *Mit Wuerd und Hoheit* I felt his tone was definitely undersize, and here for once I took exception to the quick tempo adopted. Kim Borg makes up in musical feeling and dramatic intelligence what he lacks in sensuous vocal quality. Not the least of the set's virtues is the balance: the orchestral sound is clear and crisp, but it never dominates too much, and the choral work is exceptionally clean. All in all, this is the best *Creation* so far issued, and one that will be hard to surpass. —P.L.M.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 94 ("Surprise"); MOZART: Eine kleine Nachtmusik, K. 525; The N.W.D.R. Symphony Orchestra* conducted by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt. Capitol P-18022, \$3.98.

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other three movements. Since the performance of the Mozart *Serenade* (over-side) is equally well played, one unhesitatingly recommends this disc to the attention of Haydn and Mozart partisans. Curiously, the Mozart work seems better reproduced on first acquaintance, but this is due to the fact that the level of sound is slightly higher than in the Haydn. Turning the volume control up for the latter is necessary to match the Mozart. —P.H.R.

HAYDN: *Sonatas in A flat, No. 8; in G, No. 10; in C minor, No. 25; and in E, No. 30; Kathleen Long (piano).* London LL 1380, \$3.98.

▲WHILE the Peters Edition numbering of the Haydn sonatas is used on the record sleeve, the more commonly accepted Breitkopf and Haertel numbering is used on the disc itself (Nos. 46, 40, 20 and 31). In spite of the efforts of the Haydn Society, only about a third of the more than fifty sonatas have been recorded, and two of them (the *G* and the *E*) appear here for the first time on LP. Pianists in search of repertory ought to look into them, for they are in many ways more original and interesting than the over-recorded sonatas of Mozart. Miss Long's accurate playing conveys much of the music's wit, but some *presto* movements sound rushed, and one would like to hear

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more imaginative use of sudden changes in dynamics. Good sound. —E.Z.

LISZT: *Fifteen Hungarian Rhapsodies*; Alexander Erchowsky (piano). Victor 6238 (2 discs), \$7.96.

▲**BRAILOWSKY** handles some of the great difficulties of this music with such great ease that one is especially surprised when he fails with the simpler—and more important—matters. He is especially expert with the dulcimer-like treble passages, but often the left-hand chords underneath them are missing, or carelessly played. Far more surprising is his frequent disregard of rests and pauses, his careless pedalling, and an almost unbelievable inaccuracy of rhythm in the big "Allegro eroico" chords of the famous *No. 14*. These extremely uneven performances are well recorded, and well arranged on the discs—although this necessarily involved a shifting of the numerical order. —E.Z.

MARTIN: *Six Monologues* from Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann*; **SCHUBERT:** *Der Strom*; *Der Wanderer*, *Op. 65, no. 2*; *Totengräbers Heimweh*; *Auf der Donau*, *Op. 21, no. 1*; *Fischerweise*, *Op. 96, no. 4*; *Der zuernende Barde*; *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus*, *Op. 24, no. 1*; Heinz Rehfuss (baritone) and Frank Martin (piano). London LL 1405, \$3.98.

▲**THE Monologues** were composed in 1943 to texts from Hofmannsthal's adaptation of the old English morality play, *Everyman*, long a feature of the Salzburg festivals. They were conceived for voice and orchestra, though Martin himself here accompanies them at the piano. The Swiss composer is said to have intended his settings for concert rather than theatrical performance. Like others of his works, they are extremely sparing of musical materials; the words are set in such a way that they stand out clearly over a background in which every note counts. Naturally a major share of the effect depends on the listener's understanding of the text (not furnished with the record) which deals with man facing Death and his Maker. I have a feeling the songs will wear well: certainly they are written effectively for the voice, and while their texture is sparse its somber character makes its points. The Schubert side of the disc is a credit to the artist's choice of repertoire, for, avoiding entirely the composer's best-known songs, he has turned up several that will be new to most listeners. *Der Wanderer*, be it noted, is not to be confused with another of that title; it is a touchingly nostalgic song, more akin to *Der Wanderer an dem Mond*. Rehfuss is best in the more dramatic moments. He does not miss his chance in that very great song, *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus*, nor in the agitated *Der Strom*. Essentially he is still an opera singer, by which token he is more at home in the Martin cycle than

even the best of his Schubert. But he has come a long way since his Wolf and Mussorgsky recordings. —P.L.M.

MENDELSSOHN: *Concertos No. 1 in G minor and No. 2 in D minor*; Peter Katin (piano) with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Anthony Collins. London LL 1453, \$3.98.

▲**THIS** may not be profound music, but it is full of the Mendelssohnian grace, charm and vigor. The *D minor* is more serious than the earlier *G minor*, and, to my taste, less interesting. Katin and Collins play with the proper unpretentiousness, and Katin's virtuosity is delicate without being puerile. First-rate sound reproduction. —E.Z.

MOZART: *Concerto No. 12 in A, K. 414*; *Concerto No. 14 in E Flat, K. 449*; Denis Matthews (piano) with The Festival Orchestra conducted by Rudolph Schwarz. Capitol P-18015, \$3.98.

▲**IN** November of 1954, these concertos performed by Denis Matthews, Rudolf Schwarz and the Philharmonia Orchestra were issued on English Columbia disc SX1031. As most of us know, English Columbia recordings are released by Angel in this country, but the present disc seems to have been passed up by Angel. Why Capitol inherits it, one cannot say. Of course, this is the same English release with a new label and a rechristened orchestra. Denis Matthews is a somewhat self-effacing musician. He performs these concertos with a musical honesty that enlists commendation, but this is hardly enough to uphold interest in these Mozart compositions. The Kraus-Munch version of the *K. 414* and the Isotomin-Casals one of the *K. 449* are superior in every way and recommended for sustaining interest both sonically and artistically. The sound is quite good here. —J.N.

MOZART: *Concerto No. 25 in C, K. 503*; *Concerto No. 26 in D, K. 537* ("Coronation"); Friedrich Gulda (piano) with New Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Anthony Collins. London LL-1370, \$3.98.

▲**THE** musical competence of Gulda is above question. Apparently, he can do anything that he sets his mind and fingers to do, but the heart element or the intensity of drama is seldom applied. I am speaking of Gulda as the "long hair", not as the "short hair". His excursion into jazz might be another story—as yet I am not convinced. Of the two performances, the *C major Concerto* comes off the better, but comparing it with the Gieseke and Fischer versions it does not invite a transfer of allegiance. It is Collins and the orchestra, so splendidly reproduced, that supplies the needed element of virtuosity to the "Coronation"; Gulda seems small-scaled in comparison. Of the

versions of this work in the catalogue, none is equal in spirit and zest to the dubbed-from-78 version of Landowska, though young Demus gives a praiseworthy performance for brilliance and liveness which is backed by a less satisfactory performance of the *C major Concerto, K. 467*. The recording is excellent in this London disc, if a little heavy on the bass end. —P.H.R.

MOZART: *Divertimento in D, K. 131*; *Cassation in B flat, K. 99*; American Chamber Orchestra conducted by Robert Scholz. Westminster XWN-18261, \$3.98.

▲**LIKE** the *Divertimento in E flat, K. 113*, this one in *D* is in concertante form, meaning that the wind instruments are pitted against the strings. It dates from 1772, Mozart's seventeenth year. Einstein calls it a serenade and remarks on its richer and more festive qualities in comparison to the *K. 113*. Both this and the *Cassation, K. 99* (later written in 1769) are pieces for festive occasions—probably background music for the socially elect of his day; specifically, in these cases for Salzburg society. Exactly what occasions brought forth these works is conjectural. Suffice it to say that no matter for what occasion Mozart wrote he found inspiration more than suitable to it. Of the two compositions, I think the *K. 131* is the more durable. The performances, though carefully planned and executed, would have profited by more spontaneity. Westminster's excellent recording is a most praiseworthy part of this enterprise. —P.H.R.

MOZART: *Divertimento No. 7 in D, K. 205*; *Divertimento No. 1 in E flat, K. 113*; *Two Minuets with Contredances, K. 463*; Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra conducted by Ernest Marzendorfer. London LL-1427, \$3.98.

▲**THE** two *Divertimentos* date from Mozart's sixteenth and eighteenth years. The *K. 113* and the two symphonies that surround it (*K. 112* and *114*) are Italian in style. *K. 112* and *K. 113* were composed in Milan in 1771, *K. 114* in Salzburg later that year. Mozart was sixteen years old. This so-called divertimento is in reality stylistically akin to a *sinfonia concertante*; the wind instruments here are used in opposition to the strings. Both this and the more lengthy *K. 205*, composed two years later for a garden party in Vienna, are so characteristic of their composer in their melodic structure and their spontaneity and grace that one finds them pleasantly diverting, and not just as background music. The pieces that round out the program, dating from 1784 are, as the annotator says, "perfect, masterly miniatures". The performances are appreciative for the lilting grace the conductor contrives to bring to the quicker movements. Excellent sound. —P.H.R.

MOZART: *Requiem Mass in D minor*, K. 626; Irmgard Seefried (soprano), Jennie Tourel (contralto), Leopold Simoneau (tenor), William Warfield (basso), Westminster Choir and Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York, conducted by Bruno Walter. Columbia ML 5012, \$3.98.

▲IT MAY be that something of the hectic impression I have of this recording is due to the reproduction, which is certainly not helped by its long reverberation. There is a lack of clarity in chorus and orchestra and a certain flabbiness in the texture. Which is to say I found the disc disappointing, hardly comparable to the best rival recordings—those of Jochum, Krips and Scherchen. The solo quartet, though made up of very estimable artists, is uneven, with Seefried standing out effortlessly as the bright star. —P.L.M.

MOZART: *Symphony No. 39 in E-flat*, K. 543; *Symphony No. 41 in C*, K. 551; the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Bruno Walter. Columbia ML-5014, \$3.98.

▲PURISTS might quibble over the nuances and contrasting tempi taken by Walter in measures 1 and 2 as opposed to measures 7 and 8, in the opening movement of the *Jupiter Symphony*. For me the slight liberties only add to a pair of beautiful interpretations. Few conductors living today have so moving a way with Mozart's ethereal adagios; few can convey the humor and subtlety of the faster movements with such crystal clarity. Since Walter's approach is essentially a Viennese one, both works glow with an easy *Gemuetlichkeit* absent in the recent hard-driven Toscanini release of the *E-flat Symphony*. The sound is good. —A.K.

THE ART OF PADEREWSKI: *Etudes in C minor*, Op. 10, No. 12 ("Revolutionary"); in *C sharp minor*, Op. 25, No. 7; in *G flat*, Op. 10, No. 5 ("Black Keys"); *Prelude in A flat*, Op. 28, No. 17; *Waltz in C sharp minor*, Op. 64, No. 2 (Chopin); *Moment Musical in A flat*, Op. 24, No. 2 (Schubert); *By the Brookside* (Stojowski); *La Bandoline*; *Le Carillon de Cythere* (Couperin); *Warum?* (Schumann); *Nocturne in B flat*, Op. 16, No. 4 (Paderewski); *Etude de Concert in F minor* (Liszt); *Minstrels* (Debussy); *Sonata No. 14 in C sharp minor*, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight"), first movement (Beethoven). Ignace Jan Paderewski (piano). Camden CAL 310, \$1.98.

▲PADEREWSKI was born in 1860, and the recordings from which this Camden disc is compiled were made in the 1920's and '30's, long after his prime. Members of the generation that never heard him should be fascinated by this collection of pieces. They will, no doubt, be disap-

pointed by the old-fashioned "stops" in the Chopin *Prelude*, and by the now annoying affectation of playing the melody note just a bit later than the accompaniment, most evident in the *C sharp minor Etude* and even in the marvelous "Moonlight". At the same time they should be amazed by the power that comes through two layers of recording in the "Revolutionary" *Etude*, the languorous romanticism of the Schumann, and the perfect delicacy of the Liszt—qualities that echo the great playing that made "Paderewski" a household word even in unmusical homes. —E.Z.

RICHTER, Marga: *Sonata*; **BEN-HAIM, Paul:** *Sonata*; Menahem Pressler (piano). M-G-M E3244, \$3.98.

▲BOTH of these long and difficult works were written for and dedicated to Mr. Pressler, who has met their extreme technical demands with great virtuosity, and their emotional demands with what appears to be perfect understanding of each composer's intent. Miss Richter is American, and Mr. Ben-Haim, like Mr. Pressler, Israeli. Of the two works, Miss Richter's is the richer and more powerful. Although its harsh dissonance precludes any immediately appealing sentiment, its large proportions and full use of every

sort of piano technique place it, as Miss Richter intended, in the tradition of the "big" sonatas of the 19th century. Mr. Ben-Haim's work is a companion to the solo violin sonata he wrote for Yehudi Menuhin. The material is influenced by the composer's study of oriental folk music, but the forms are western, the movements being a toccata, a strict fugue, and a set of variations. Both are highly serious works, well recorded, and worth attending to. —E.Z.

ROZSA: *Violin Concerto*; Dallas Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Walter Hendl; **SPOHR:** *Concerto No. 8, in A Minor, Op. 47 (Gesangs-szene)*; R.C.A. Victor Orchestra, Izler Solomon, conductor (in the Spohr); both with Jascha Heifetz (violin). Victor LM-2027, \$3.98.

▲ONE is happy to see the release of a definitely performed Spohr *Concerto No. 8*. This is a lovely work, sincere and rich in sentiment, and overflowing with tender melodies, "written in the manner of an operatic scena". Heifetz's performance is authoritative. The microphone is a bit too close to him, however, and the orchestra sounds as if it were in the next room. This is regrettable, for Solomon conducts with considerable skill, and i



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he and Heifetz were properly blended this recording would probably leave nothing to be desired. Luckily, the faulty balance is not in evidence on the reverse side. Here, Heifetz plays a remarkable score by the contemporary Hollywood composer, Miklos Rozsa. Heifetz is, if anything, in better form than in the Spohr. His technical and tonal mastery can only be described as phenomenal. Phenomenal, also, is the Concerto—Rozsa disproves the commonly-held theory that movie composers cannot write music of substance. The work is contemporary in mood, but with rare lyric beauty.

—D.H.M.

The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom: Cathedral Choir of the Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral of New York City, Nicholas Afonsky, director. Westminster XWN-18204, \$3.98.

▲ONE cannot help but think of the Original Don Cossacks while listening to this rich and moving liturgical music. This is a mixed choir, however, with a style that is more devotional and less given to sensational effects for their own sake. Russian choirs are known for the extreme range of their voices, and this one is no exception. But the basses often seem to growl on indefinite pitches rather than to sing. In fact, all the parts of this choir have no easy time with intonation. The *fortes* are big and chesty, as they should be, but they are often flat enough to bother even a less-than-perfect ear. The conductor displays skill and familiarity with the style, which features the utmost in rhythmic flexibility, and the avoidance of a feeling of strict meter. The recording is clear and full, but you will need good equipment to reproduce the enormous climaxes without ear-shattering distortion.

—D.H.M.

SAINT-SAENS: *Concerto in A Minor, Op. 33*; **MIASKOVSKY:** *Concerto in C, Op. 66*; Mstislav Rostropovich (cello), with the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. Victor LM-2016, \$3.98.

▲THIS is certainly one of the finest performances on LP of the Saint-Saens concerto thus far. Rostropovich's visit to this country was somewhat overshadowed by that of his countryman, David Oistrakh. He is no less an artist, however. His tone is not big, but it is liquid, sweet, and well-rounded. There is no grunting and groaning here—all is done with utmost sensitivity and regard for the music. Top this off with his superb technique, and you have a cellist of no mean stature. The Miaskovsky is, again, beautifully played, but its musical content is perhaps less-than-the-best. A great deal of it is slow in tempo which is, of course, not a fault if the composer has something to say. In this case, one cannot say that he does. Rostropovich

is backed up by the superb performance of the Philharmonia under Sir Malcolm's imaginative baton. This fact plays no small part in making this disc one of the more significant of recent concerto releases. The sound is excellent. —D.H.M.

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 5 in B flat: Incidental Music to Rosamunde—Entr'actes and Ballet Music*; N.W.D.R. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt. Capitol P-18021, \$3.98.

▲SCHMIDT-ISSERSTEDT'S sensible and tasteful performances of these Schubert scores rate them at the top of similar releases. The Northwest German Radio Orchestra of Hamburg, which this conductor created in 1945, is a fine organization that unanimously responds in every department to his solicitous directions. The youthful buoyancy of the symphony's rhythms, especially the opening and closing movements, is happily conveyed. Only Beecham conveys more subtleties in his treatment of Schubert's melodies. The overall sound, however, remains in Schmidt-Isserstedt's favor, for the reverberation in the Beecham record is a bit excessive for the good of Schubert's music. Stokowski evokes more beautiful sounds in his version of the ballet music, but Schmidt-Isserstedt is closer to the style and simple heart of the composer. Equally fine recording here.

—P.H.R.

SCHUMANN: *Fantasiestücke, Op. 12*; *Waldscenen, Op. 82*; Friedrich Gulda (piano). London LL 1371, \$3.98.

▲IN comparison with the rest of Schumann's piano music, the *Waldscenen* has been neglected on discs, and it is good to find it here coupled with the early *Fantasiestücke*. Gulda plays almost all the pieces beautifully, conveying the poetic quality of each miniature without exaggeration and mannerism. Perhaps "Warum?" of *Op. 12* asks for a richer tone, and the marvelous "Vogel als Prophet" of *Op. 82* for a tone less pointed; but these are merely personal preferences not intended to diminish the praise of this fine-sounding disc.

—E.Z.

STRAUSS: *Don Quixote, Op. 35*; NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arturo Toscanini (Frank Miller, cello, Carlton Cooley, viola, Daniel Guilet, solo violin). RCA Victor LM-2026, \$3.98.

▲THOUGH this recording was derived from an NBC broadcast of November 22, 1953, the brilliance of sound that Toscanini produced with the NBC Symphony and also the clarity of line and texture, are surprisingly brought out in this dubbing. Such brightness and transparency of orchestral sound nobly serves the music of this score. One does not have to hear a half-inch of this recording to realize that one is about to hear one of

the great performances of this Straussian masterpiece. It seems a pity that one of the two performances that Toscanini gave back in 1938, with the late Emanuel Feuermann as cello soloist, could not have been salvaged, but the reproductive characteristics of 15 years later allow for added values that will meet with everybody's approval. Frank Miller makes a homespun figure of the Don, while Carlton Cooley tends to be a bit self-effacing as Sancho Panza, but after all neither performer is supposed to be exploited as is a soloist in a concerto. Rightfully, *Don Quixote* should be the conductor's show, as Strauss intended and Toscanini knew full well. As a Toscanini adherent, I am grateful that RCA Victor was able to prepare such a fine recording of the last of the Maestro's performances of *Don Quixote*.

—P.H.R.

STRAVINSKY: *Oedipus Rex*; Hélène Bouvier (Jocasta); Ernst Haefliger (Oedipus); James Loomis (Creon and Messenger); André Vessières (Tiresias); Hugues Cuenod (Shepherd); Paul Pasquier (Speaker); La Société Chorale du Brassus and Suisse Romande Orchestra, conducted by Ernest Ansermet. London XLL 1273, \$4.98.

▲AS the score stands, we now have two versions of Stravinsky's "opera oratorio," one directed by the composer and with the author of the Latin text, Jean Cocteau, acting as narrator, the other under the baton of the man who conducted the world premiere in 1927. The qualities of the two performances are clean-cut. Stravinsky strives as usual for great clarity and a kind of dry transparency (if this is not misusing the language) while Ansermet does more in the way of molding and polishing. Rhythmically Stravinsky is more elemental, more square-cut. The assisting singers in both sets carry out these conceptions. Peter Pears, as Oedipus, is more forceful than Haefliger, and because of the peculiarly high range of his voice he is more comfortable in the music. Martha Moedl is vocally a more opulent Jocasta than Bouvier, and she is more dramatic, even to the point of breathing in the middle of a word. As for the reproduction, Columbia's is more powerful and somewhat coarse; the singers are actually too close to the microphone, though this may have been intended to add to the impact of the performance. For sheer sound there is no question that Ansermet has the better of things, and I am sure his will be preferred as an interpretation with which to live.

—P.L.M.

TOSCANINI conducting the N. Y. Philharmonic Orchestra. ROSSINI: *Semiramide Overture*; **VERDI:** *La Traviata—Preludes to Acts 1 and 3*; **WAGNER:** *Siegfried Idyll*; **DUKAS:** *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Camden CAL-309, \$1.98.

▲THESE recordings were made by Toscanini in 1929 and 1936. The Dukas and Verdi selections date from 1929, the others from 1936. Naturally, the reproduction of the Rossini—one of the Maestro's finest performances of a Rossini overture—and the Wagner are sonically superior though hardly a ear-satisfying treat heard after a modern recording. As mementoes of Toscanini's unparalleled way with Rossini and Verdi, at least two performances on this disc will suffice to make it a collector's item. —P.H.R.

POPS SPOTLIGHT

CAMDEN, RCA Victor's economy label, has come up with one of the sweetest bargains of the season. Breathes there a jazz fan so jaded that he cannot recall with joy the "no doubt world-renowned Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street"? I say jazz fan; heaven knows there was little about this old NBC show that had to do with either indigenous or cool jazz. It was just about as commercial as it is possible to be this side of Norman Granz. But many a jazz aficionado was born of Basin Street's audience and all of them will, I am sure, welcome this re-issue (CAL-321) with open arms. Contents: *Mood Indigo*, *Muskrat Ramble*, *Sophisticated Lady*, *Basin St. Blues*, *Star Dust*, *Body and Soul*, *St. Louis Blues*, *Memphis Blues*, *Beale Street Blues*, *Aunt Hagar's Blues*, *John Henry Blues*, and *Careless Love*. Dinah Shore and Lena Horne (both in their prime) are the soloists with Henry Levine's Barefoot Dixieland Philharmonic and Paul Laval's Woodwindy Ten. I have but one reservation: Why were Gene Hamilton's deathless annotative remarks left out?

COLUMBIA has been as busy as ever. Two albums stand out in the most recent lot. One, *That Old Feeling*, is a superb compilation of favorites sung by Frankie Sinatra with several orchestras—those of Axel Stordahl, Hugo Winterhalter, Jeff Alexander, and Mitchell Ayres (CL-902). The program assembles, in addition to the title tune, *Blue Skies*, *The Nearness of You*, *That Lucky Old Sun*, *A Fellow Needs a Girl*, *Poinciana*, and several other beloved standards. The interesting thing about this disc is that its performance quality is consistently high although the contents were cut at intervals quite a while ago. Even when Frankie had not-so-hot material to work with, he was—and remains—a master craftsman. So, in his way, is Les Elgart, and his latest (*The Elgart Touch*, CL-875) is additional proof. A nice, clean, swinging dance beat is his way, and he pursues it here with *Autumn Serenade*, *Three to Get Ready*, *Slo Roll*, *Stompin' at the Savoy*, *Where or When*, *Fascinatin' Rhythm*, and a half-dozen others.

DECCA'S most important pop release this time is an omnibus re-issue (DX-153) entitled simply *Ethel Merman—A Musical Autobiography*. These two discs contain no less than thirty-four memorable performances by La Merman, who is surely one of our greatest artists. The collection goes back through the years to 1930, when "Girl Crazy" (and dear Ethel) gave the world its first luscious taste of *I Got Rhythm* and *Embraceable You*. Remember *Life Is Just a Bowl of Cherries*, *I Get a Kick Out of You*, *It's De-lor-ely*, *Doin' What Comes Nat'ally*, *They Say It's Wonderful*, *The Hostess with the Mostes* on the Ball, *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, *How Deep Is the Ocean?* They are all here—not only selections from the earlier show albums but also a sampling of the wonderful TV show that Ethel did for Ford with Mary Martin. The program notes by Louis Untermyer will bring tears to your eyes, I guarantee.

LONDON has been getting into the pop business on a big scale. Not popular pop, mind you, because American and English tastes do not run along the same lines in this regard. But both publics seem to have the same predispositions in such miscellany as mood music, cocktail lounge stuff, and brass bands. Indeed, the *ffrr* redoubtable who operates under the surname of Mantovani is just about the hottest thing in the American market. His latest (LL-1513) is assured an even larger market than usual now that English movies have taken over our TV wee hours; it is entitled *Music from the Films* and it includes the *Warsaw Concerto*, *Serenata d'Amore*, *The Dream of Olwen*, *Legend of the Glass Mountain*, *Story of Three Loves*, and the *Cornish Rhapsody*. Beautifully lush performances in silken sound. In the heavy brass department try *Men of Brass* (LL-1456), being a concert by the massed bands of Foden's, Fairey Aviation, and Morris Motors (all large British firms). The program ranges from such whistleables as Pryor's *The Whistler* and his *Dog* to the *Introduction to Act III of Lohengrin* and the *1812 Overture*. Quite overwhelming.

VIK has quite an impressive list. Richard Maltby's gang is represented with an album called *Hue-Fi Moods* (LX-1051). That's no misprint, brethren; and it's no misnomer, either. Dick has been at pains to choose a dozen numbers that each of them connotes one or another color (*In the Blue of Evening*, *Tangerine*, *Rose Room*, etc.) and to vary his tonal colorations accordingly. Easy listening. In the hue-and-cry-fi department (that's a joke), try *Wired for Sound* (LX-1054), in which twelve arrangements by Martin Gold are given the fullest sonic treatment. In addition to the standard instruments this processing involves the clavoline, glockenspiel, and multiple Chinese bells, so you can imagine the consequences. A real lease-breaker, this one. Similarly *From Another World* (LX-1053), in which Sis Bass conducts several of his arrangements—*Old Devil Moon*, *Star Dust*, *Cabin in the Sky*, *East of the Sun*, and sundry other non-temporal titles.

RIVERSIDE has brought out its long-awaited "History of Classic Jazz" (SDP-11) and it had better be noted here because the more sophisticated jazz folk take umbrage at including Dixieland in any space devoted to the subject. They seem to

regard it as folk music, or dance music, or something, but not as jazz. Well, I'm here to tell you that this Riverside album is a corker, whatever classification you want to put it in. Myself, I would file it under history, because the five dozen selections range all the way back to Africa (geographically) and Charleston street cries (chronologically). Just about every big name in indigenous music-making from the turn of the century through the last decade is represented somewhere in this staggering collection. And the accompanying 20,000-word brochure by Charles Edward Smith is all but worth the price of the whole. He is a single-minded fellow, convinced as he is that blues-derived jazz is the only kind there is. But there are lots of people who concur and they will need no urging to acquire this set.

GROOVE offers notably *The Many Moods of Ann*, being a recital of sorts by Ann Gilbert (LG-1004) backed by the fine Elliot Lawrence orchestra. A new thrust out of Chicago, Miss Gilbert has an engaging style and an even more engaging physiognomy. She is also classically trained, although that nominal liability seems to become an asset in her case. The contents: *Tall Boy*, *He Needs Me*, *Fun to be Fooled*, *Spring Is Here*, *Blame it on my Youth*, and such. Easy listening. Fellow name of George Rhodes has made a swell record (*Real George*, LG-1005) that augurs happily for his emergence as a new popular-type jazz pianist. He is jazz-oriented, that is to say, but he plays for the sort of audiences who used to go for Frankie Carle (and who have found no replacement to date). His manner is semi-sophisticated but never intellectual. Listen to his *Love for Sale*, *Dino*, *Lower Come Back to Me*, *The Tender Trap*, or *Swingin' at the Embers* and be convinced that this boy has the goods. J.A.S.

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